

ILLEGIB

23 December 1963

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I have read Secretary McNamara's memorandum to you on the Vietnam situation. My observations on the situation are covered in a separate memorandum which was left with Mr. Bundy on Saturday, but attached is a copy for your ready reference.

There is no substantive difference between Secretary McNamara and myself except perhaps I feel a little less pessimistic than he. Nevertheless, as I state in my conclusion, there are more reasons to be pessimistic than to be optimistic about prospects of our success in South Vietnam.

Much depends on the ability of the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) to provide strong leadership and inspiration to the people of Vietnam, to properly administer the affairs of the country, and to successfully prosecute the war. All of this is yet to be demonstrated.

STAT

I intend to return to South Vietnam in 90 days or sooner.

Sincerely,

/s/ John A. McCone  
John A. McCone  
Director

Attachment

O & 1 w/attach - The President by hand on 12/24.

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JAM/mfb

lcc - DCI chrono (no att)

1 - C/FE for info (no attach)

1 - DDCI by hand